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Security Council

Forty-ninth Year

Provisional

3342nd Meeting

Wednesday, 2 March 1994, 5.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Mérimée	*(France)*
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cardenas
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Li Zhaoxing
	Czech Republic	Mr. Rovensky
	Djibouti	Mr. Olhaye
	New Zealand	Ms. Wong
	Nigeria	Mr. Uhomoibhi
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Pakistan	Mr. Marker
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lozinskiy
	Rwanda	Mr. Bizimana
	Spain	Mr. Yañez Barnuevo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David Hannay
	United States of America	Mr. Boardman

Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. The situation in the occupied Arab territories

   Letter dated 25 February 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1994/222)

   Letter dated 25 February 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1994/223)

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The meeting was called to order at 5.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the occupied Arab territories

Letter dated 25 February 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1994/222)

Letter dated 25 February 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1994/223)

The President *(interpretation from French):* In accordance with the decisions taken at the previous meetings of the Council, I invite the representative of Israel to take a place at the Council table; I invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Greece, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Qatar, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Yaacobi (Israel) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Mr. Lamamra (Algeria), Mr. Al-Faihani (Bahrain), Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh), Mr. Elaraby (Egypt), Mr. Exarchos (Greece), Mr. Soegarda (Indonesia), Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Hatano (Japan), Mr. Bataineh (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Makkawi (Lebanon), Mr. Elhouderi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Razali (Malaysia), Mr. Ould Mohamed Mahmoud (Mauritania), Mr. Al-Ni'mah (Qatar), Mr. Yassin (Sudan), Mr. Awad (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia), Mr. Batu (Turkey), Mr. Khandogy (Ukraine) and Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on the agenda.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to the following documents: S/1994/229, letter dated 28 February 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; S/1994/237, letter dated 28 February 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/1994/238, letter dated 28 February 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/1994/239, letter dated 1 March 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the text of a Communiqué of the Committee on Palestine of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The first speaker is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Soegarda *(Indonesia):* At the outset, Sir, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the office of President of the Security Council for the month of March. We are confident that under your able guidance, and with your diplomatic skill, the Council's deliberations will lead to the initiation of effective measures.

May I also avail myself of this opportunity to convey through you our appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Roble Olhaye of Djibouti, for the able leadership he provided to the Council during last month.

My delegation asked to participate in the Council's debate owing to its profound concern over the situation in

the occupied Palestinian territories, specifically in the town of Al-Khalil. The present meetings were requested by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab Group in the wake of the cold-blooded attack on worshippers who were offering prayers in a mosque, an attack that caused the death of more than 60 people and the wounding of more than 200. This outrage was further compounded by the killing of numerous Palestinians through a massive show of force by the Israeli army, resulting in numerous clashes and instances of confrontation. As if that were not enough, Al-Khalil and other areas have been either placed under curfew or declared closed military zones. My delegation is truly shocked by these actions.

The Indonesian Government's sense of outrage and its condemnation of the premeditated and barbaric attack was fully reflected in the statement issued in Jakarta by the Department of Foreign Affairs on 26 February 1994, which said *inter alia* that the massacre at the Al-Ibrahimi mosque was a despicable and criminal act towards innocent people and that the Government of Israel must be held accountable for such acts.

My Government has consistently maintained its firm unity with the people of Palestine in calling for concrete action by this Council to secure Israel's compliance with the Council's relevant and long-standing resolutions as well as with its obligation to protect the Palestinians in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In the light of the gravity of the situation, we fully support the decision of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab Group to bring the matter before the Security Council to secure an immediate end to the Israeli policies of oppression and to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian people through the presence of international observers.

Clearly, the brutal attack of last week and any recurrence of such attacks cannot but threaten a further escalation of tension and confrontation in the region, and could even bring about a setback to the ongoing peace process. My delegation therefore calls upon the Council not to shirk its responsibility and to respond with firmness, not only to put an end to such acts and prevent their recurrence, but, even more so, to achieve a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict as a whole, a settlement that must necessarily include the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Indonesia, as Chairman of the Committee on Palestine of the Non-Aligned Movement, would like to inform the Council that the Committee adopted a communiqué at its meeting held yesterday concerning the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. As members of the Council are aware, the Committee expressed its strong condemnation of the barbaric attack on Palestinian worshippers in the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque, and it urged the international community to take decisive measures to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories and to disarm the settlers pending the dismantlement of illegal settlements. Furthermore, it reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and called upon the Security Council to take immediate remedial measures to forestall the recurrence of similar acts. The Committee also decided to monitor closely the developments in the occupied Palestinian territories in order to ensure that they are conducive to the implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as a step towards the Palestinians' exercising their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence.

Before concluding, may I, on behalf of the Government and the people of Indonesia, extend our heartfelt condolences and deep sympathy to our Palestinian brothers, and in particular to the bereaved families.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Indonesia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Greece. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Exarchos *(Greece) (interpretation from French):* First of all, I would like to say how pleased I am to see you assume the presidency of the Security Council. Your experience and professional abilities guarantee the success of the Council's work during the month of March. I would also like to congratulate your predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Djibouti, on the excellent guidance he gave the Council during the past month.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union, which wishes to express its deep outrage over the abominable act of terrorism that took place in Hebron, and all the acts of violence which have followed it, causing the loss of innocent lives. That act of terrorism against innocent civilians was all the more horrible in that it occurred in a place of worship. We extend our sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

We have frequently condemned violence, whatever its source, and expressed the hope that its consequences will from now on be part of a bygone era.

We have noted with satisfaction the strong condemnation of these acts by the Israeli Government. However, we recall that the Israeli authorities have responsibility for ensuring the protection and safety of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories in accordance with their obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The European Union welcomes the measures announced last Sunday by the Israeli Government designed to put an end to illegal acts by Israeli settlers. These measures are without any doubt a step in the right direction. We will follow very carefully the progress of the inquiry to determine the circumstances of the massacre.

We also earnestly appeal to the Israeli authorities to continue their efforts to establish the necessary conditions for stabilizing the situation. The European Union would in particular call on the parties to conclude an agreement on a temporary international or foreign presence, as provided for in the Declaration of Principles.

The European Union would also urge all interested parties to refuse to be caught up in a spiral of violence, but, rather, to intensify their efforts to advance the peace process which has now begun. We repeat that we attach extreme importance to that process, which we fully support, and we express the hope that it will not be impeded or delayed by the tragic events.

The European Union welcomed the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement of 13 September 1993 with particular satisfaction, since that agreement represented the beginning of the implementation of principles, including peaceful coexistence and respect for each other's security and dignity, which we had advocated for many years. The European Union is still convinced that a just and overall settlement will put an end to the tension and the confrontations. We reiterate our appeals for peace to be confirmed as the clear and unanimous choice of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Greece for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Awad *(Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic):* I am pleased to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's pleasure at seeing you preside over the Security Council this month. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Olhaye for his efforts as President of the Council last month. I am also pleased to welcome the representatives of the new members of the Security Council.

The entire population of the Syrian Arab Republic was deeply shocked by the news of the abominable massacre of Palestinian worshippers praying at dawn on Friday in the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque in the city of Hebron, a massacre in which there were scores of martyrs and hundreds of wounded. This odious terrorist act reminds Arabs and Muslims of the Deir Yassin massacre in 1948. This terrorist act proves to the entire world the gravity of the continuing Israeli occupation of Arab territories and the establishment of Israeli settlements in those territories, carried out contrary to all laws and scorning all resolutions of the United Nations and the Charter. It is a flagrant act of defiance.

It is obvious to the whole international community that the obstinate attitude of Israel, its expansionist aims and its delaying tactics in the peace talks for more than two years are directly or indirectly responsible for extremism in the region. The terrorist act which cost the lives of worshippers praying in the mosque of Ibrahim during the holy month of Ramadan was a deliberate, premeditated crime, not an irresponsible, individual act, as Israel claims. Therefore, we hold the occupying State responsible for crimes perpetrated by settlers. We call for the disarming of the settlers and for implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention with a view to ensuring the protection of Arab citizens in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

Syria is aware that the whole world condemns this odious massacre. Syria is also aware that words of condemnation and reproof are not sufficient to put an end to the cycle of violence and terror. Only the end of the Israeli occupation without further delay in the current peace talks and the accession of the Palestinian people to its right to self-determination can guarantee an end to extremism and violence and the establishment of a just and lasting comprehensive peace.

Since the peace talks began Israel has been attempting to extract a peace document from the Arab side before it will accept, even on principle, the concession which peace demands - the return of the occupied territories to their rightful owners.

Ever since the Madrid Conference, and despite the changes in the Israeli administration, the Israeli negotiators have been trying to change the purpose of the Middle East peace talks from peace for land to peace for Arab concessions. Indeed, in its discussions with my country, Israel is asking Syria to agree to the normalization of all bilateral relations before any official mention of Israel's readiness to withdraw completely from the occupied Golan. Far from indicating any such readiness, the Prime Minister of Israel, ever since his accession to power, has affirmed that he will not deal with the Golan in its entirety. He recently surprised the world by declaring that he would leave the question of withdrawal from Golan to a referendum, as if the question of Syrian Golan, contrary to all international law and custom, were an internal domestic Israeli issue. Thus, it is the Israeli voter who will decide the fate of negotiations between Arabs and Israelis.

With reference to talks with Lebanon, Israel requests that Lebanon take action against its southern population and that it suppress the legal opposition to its military occupation. At the same time, Israel refuses to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

Moreover, Israel denies the peoples of the occupied territories the right to resist occupation and expects the Governments of those territories to join with the occupying force in suppressing national resistance, as if the purpose of peace were to set in stone for ever the Israeli occupation, rather than to terminate it.

That is the Israeli mentality confronting the Arabs in the peace talks. If the two States which are co-sponsoring the peace conference do not intervene on behalf of the international community in favour of the peace process - if they do not implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations with a view to reaching a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement - Israel will put into practice the principle espoused by former Prime Minister Shamir, who said: "It is my intention to negotiate with the Arabs for 10 years without allowing those talks to reach any settlement whatsoever".

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamamra *(Algeria) (interpretation from Arabic):* Sir, I should like to express the congratulations of the delegation of Algeria on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. Your personal and professional qualities and the experience of your country in the question of the Middle East guarantee the Council's success in this grave matter under consideration. I also take this occasion to express to the Permanent Representative of Djibouti our deep appreciation for the contribution he made during his tenure of office last month.

As we are all aware, the Declaration of Principles signed on 13 September 1993 between the PLO and Israel was the first step towards peace. In spite of the difficulties that have been hampering full implementation of the Declaration of Principles, in letter and in spirit and in keeping with its agenda, the international community still feels optimistic regarding the peace process. However, the odious massacre that took place in Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi in occupied Hebron reminds us that the enemies of peace, who attach no importance to human life or to holy shrines and places of worship as symbols of tolerance and goodwill will stop at nothing in their attempts to dash hopes and to ignite the fire of envy. Their aim is to prevent the establishment of permanent, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East such as would bring justice to the Palestinian people, which has suffered from injustice and oppression for decades.

The gravity of last Friday's massacre of worshippers in a holy shrine resides not only in the inadmissibility of that criminal act, but also in its ramifications, as made clear by news reports. The seriousness of the act is compounded by the position adopted by the occupation authorities, which must bear full responsibility by virtue of their obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The occupation authorities bear additional responsibility in view of their obligation to have taken the necessary preventive action. They are also responsible for the arbitrary acts of oppression that resulted in many victims among the worshippers who survived the massacre and who took to the streets outside the mosque to express their grief.

It has become clear that the political question highlighted by last Friday's massacre is that of the illegal settlements established in the occupied Arab territories. The occupation authorities have no right to use such settlements as a pretext to shirk their contractual obligations or their responsibility to create the necessary conditions to

enable the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and independence.

If we are to avert the current situation's potential threat to peace and stability in the territory of Palestine, the settlers must be disarmed and their settlements dismantled.

Algeria, represented by President Liamine Zeroual, expressed its full solidarity with the fraternal Palestinian people and their leadership in this crisis. Algeria is, of course, calling for a special session of the Arab League, and we have informed the League and the Security Council of that fact.

Algeria deems it essential to the credibility of the United Nations and to peace in the Middle East that this meeting not consist simply of a ritualistic inveighing against any repetition of such crimes. The Security Council must find in the universal condemnation of the massacre and in its vast and immense effects grounds for a constructive reaction, one which will ensure for the Palestinians in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, sufficient protection through an adequate international presence.

In so doing, the Security Council should mobilize its efforts to give momentum to the peace process and guide it towards success so that indiscriminate violence can be brought to an end. By taking such initiatives, the Security Council will be acting on behalf of all Members of the United Nations and taking the appropriate course to honour the memory of those slain in Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi and to help ensure that their sacrifices will have spared the Palestinian people the specter of additional suffering. To that end, the Security Council should turn the text of its resolution into a message of hope and of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank the representative of Algeria for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Razali *(Malaysia)*: My delegation, Sir, would like to extend its felicitations on your assumption of the presidency for this month. We are confident that you will conduct the affairs of the Council with great integrity and dedication.

The massacre at the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque in Israeli-occupied Hebron on 25 February has deeply shocked and anguished people all over the world. The Malaysian Foreign Minister stated on 26 February that

> "Malaysia strongly condemns the brutal massacre at the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron and feels deeply saddened that such an incident has occurred in a holy place during the month of Ramadan."

The Government and people of Malaysia extend their heartfelt condolences to the State of Palestine and to the families of the deceased, and share with them their grief and bereavement.

This act of terrorism must be condemned unequivocally. The incident cannot be dismissed as the action of an alleged madman. Israel cannot escape responsibility for the killings. This massacre has once again highlighted, at terrible cost, the gravity of the situation in the occupied territories and the urgent need for Israel to change its policies and practices in the occupied territories, including the immediate disarming of its settlers.

Malaysia is disappointed that the Security Council could not be convened earlier. On such a heinous act, the Council has a Charter obligation to pronounce early and swiftly condemnation on behalf of the international community. There can be no room for partisan interests impeding the work of the Council.

Given the gravity of the situation and the urgent need to guarantee the safety of the Palestinians, the Council must take the necessary steps to ensure that all its relevant resolutions, in particular resolution 681 (1990), are implemented without delay. Resolution 681 (1990), which was adopted unanimously by the Council, strongly urged Israel to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. The Israeli Government must therefore be reminded of and be held accountable to its obligations and responsibilities under the Convention. The weight and authority of the Council must be applied to guarantee that Israel is accountable and that the safety and protection of Palestinians are guaranteed by Israel.

My delegation would like to underline the necessity of a resolution on Palestine adopted by the Council without further delay. We want that resolution to send a clear message to Israel, the occupying Power in the Palestinian territory, of its responsibilities under the Geneva Convention regarding the protection of the Palestinian civilians in all occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

We hope that the resolution would deter the recurrence of similar atrocities against the Palestinian people.

My delegation supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to dispatch an envoy to Israel to discuss the possibility of the United Nations deploying observers in that region, as envisaged in the Declaration of Principles signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization on 13 September last. We share the Secretary-General's view that such an effort

> "could serve both to support the negotiating process and to help overcome the prevailing mistrust between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the occupied territories."

If Israel is truly sincere in its efforts to find a lasting and peaceful solution to the Palestinian conflict, it should not reject the proposal for some kind of international presence in the occupied territories. In the meantime, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees must continue to help the victims and contribute towards the safety, security and well-being of all Palestinians.

Malaysia wishes to reaffirm the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the inalienable right to self-determination, and reiterates the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories. Without doubt, the violence in that part of the world underscores yet again the urgent need for the United Nations to continue to play an active role in the current peace process.

Extremism and prejudice clearly pose serious challenges to the peace process. The hopes for peace which the September Declaration of Principles engendered have yet to be realized. Extremism and terrorism must not be allowed to derail these efforts, while Israel must implement fully the Declaration of Principles. Its timely and full implementation would contribute to a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank the representative of Malaysia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan *(Kuwait)*: It gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the work of the Security Council for this month. Your experience guarantees the complete success of the Council's work, and the role of your country supports you in maintaining international peace and security.

At the same time, I should like to pay a special tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Roble Olhaye, the Permanent Representative of fraternal Djibouti, for his success in conducting the work of the Security Council over the past month, which was an active one indeed.

The Security Council is meeting now to discuss the horrifying massacre that took place on 25 February in the town of Hebron. The shock of the massacre has been felt not only by the innocent Palestinian people under occupation, but by all people of conscience throughout the world. The shock was all the greater since a number of Israeli settlers - one of them in military uniform - shot defenceless people at prayer in a place sacred to Islam in the town of Hebron, leading to 50 dead and 200 injured. The massacre shocked my country - Government and people - deeply; it was the worst massacre since the Israeli occupation began in 1967. The Government of Kuwait has issued a statement expressing the feelings of the Kuwaiti people, and that statement has been distributed as an official document of the Security Council.

Despite the wide welcome accorded the Israeli-Palestinian agreement in international, Arab and Palestinian forums, there is a widespread feeling that since the time of the Madrid peace conference the international community has ignored the right of Palestinians under occupation to live in peace and safety. The Security Council was clear about this right in its resolution 681 (1990), in which it requested the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation.

The Secretary-General has already indicated in a report (S/25149) that a special United Nations monitoring mechanism should be established in the occupied territories, as suggested in resolution 681 (1990); such a monitoring mechanism should have the effect of reassuring Palestinians, particularly those living under occupation, that their need for safety and protection is not being neglected, regardless of whatever progress is or is not being made in the peace talks.

Here, I should like to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his initiative in showing that he is ready to send international observers to

the occupied Palestinian territories. In these circumstances, it seems to us that it would be appropriate for the International Committee of the Red Cross - which, under the Fourth Geneva Convention, has a special responsibility for civilians under occupation - to play a similar observer role.

The continuation of violent acts in the occupied territories is a cause of great concern to us. We believe that the continuation of Israeli settlements and the activities of the settlers are amongst the basic obstacles to achieving tangible progress within the framework of international efforts to achieve a just and durable comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

Provocations, hostility and acts of aggression against Palestinians inside Palestinian towns, including Hebron, point to the need for the settlers to be disarmed and for the extremists to be kept under constant control. I believe that the Council must compel Israel to protect Palestinians from those who wish to place obstacles in the way of the peace process.

Kuwait calls upon the Council to include the following points in any resolution on this question, failing which it will be impossible to put an end to the cycle of aggression and counter-aggression that is undermining everything that has been achieved in the peace process.

First, a suitable mechanism to implement the Fourth Geneva Convention should be established through the deployment of a special international observer force to ensure the safety and protection of Arab citizens in occupied Palestinian and Arab towns.

Secondly, the Security Council should send a commission of inquiry to investigate this very dangerous incident.

Thirdly, the Israeli authorities should disarm the Israeli settlers and control their activities, which are endangering peace and security in the occupied Arab territories.

The Arab party takes seriously the peace negotiations that started in Madrid at the end of October 1991 under the auspices of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. To consolidate the steps taken towards peace we must achieve positive, tangible solutions to the issues that are to be discussed and negotiated between the Israelis and the Palestinians, first and foremost of which is the question of the settlements established by the occupying Power in violation of international law, and not the least of which is the question of withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, which is part and parcel of those territories.

Applying the resolutions of the Security Council, especially resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, must take high priority if real progress is to be achieved and if a success is to be made of the negotiations to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Batu *(Turkey)*: At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. We are confident that under your able guidance the Council will successfully discharge its responsibilities. I should also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Olhaye of the Republic of Djibouti for the remarkable manner in which he conducted the work of the Council in February.

The whole world heard with deep shock and dismay of the massacre of more than 50 innocent Palestinian worshippers in Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque in the early morning of 25 February. Turkey, which has a direct and natural interest in the Middle East and in the fate of its people, has strongly condemned this abhorrent act of terrorism. We are also gravely concerned by the other Palestinian casualties resulting from the continuing acts of violence by fanatical armed settlers and from the tough repressive measures taken by the Israeli security forces against Palestinian protesters following this savage massacre.

Last Friday, during the holy month of Ramadan, was a horrible day for all of us - for all Muslims and for all peace-loving people around the world. However, this massacre should not impair the peace process and allow extremist elements to interrupt the negotiations. We urge the parties to act with restraint and not to fall into the trap of those extremists and fanatics who are trying to undermine the ongoing peace process.

We call upon the Government of Israel to stop taking repressive measures. We urge the Israeli authorities to exercise the maximum restraint to avoid an escalation of violence and to act with common sense, since by doing otherwise they can only worsen the situation. The Government of Israel should guarantee the safety of the Palestinians by disarming the Israeli settlers of this area.

Israel has a responsibility to protect the Palestinian people. We urge the Israeli Government to accept the *de jure* applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of August 12, 1949, to all the territories it has occupied since 1968, including Jerusalem.

At this stage both Israelis and Palestinians should realize that they have vital strategic interests in implementing the Declaration of Principles signed on 13 September last year, and in keeping the peace process viable and irreversible. This Declaration has raised hopes and expectations over bringing about the beginning of a new era in the Middle East.

We still have full confidence in the wisdom, vision and common sense of the Palestinian and Israeli leadership. We urge them to intensify their efforts to reach an agreement on implementing the Declaration of Principles and to reaffirm their willingness *vis-à-vis* the peace process currently under way.

We hope that calm and common sense will prevail in the West Bank at this critical juncture so that the implementation of the Declaration of Principles may proceed without delay.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Turkey for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Sudan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Yassin *(Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic):* I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am sure that France - the France of history and the Revolution, the fount of freedom and justice - will guarantee us a clear-sighted and fruitful presidency this month.

I should also like to congratulate our friend Ambassador Roble Olhaye on his wise and patient guidance of the Council last month.

I should also like to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to pay tribute to him for the positive and effective role he has played. His approach to his role and his performance of his functions derive from his competence and his respect for the sovereignty of States.

I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Council in connection with the most abhorrent crime that took place in the Al-Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron during the holy month of Ramadan, at dawn on Friday, 25 February, taking the lives of about 70 worshippers and wounding hundreds more as they prayed. This massacre committed by Israeli settlers against the defenceless civilian population of Palestine has profoundly shocked the entire world because its victims were worshippers at prayer in the holy month of Ramadan and because it left a great many dead and wounded.

As the Foreign Ministry of the Sudan has noted, this crime confirms that there is collusion between the Zionist occupation forces and the criminals, who felt they had a free hand to kill and terrorize defenceless Palestinians, unarmed except for their faith in God and in the justice of their cause. This collusion is proven by the Israeli authorities' provision of full protection to the Jewish settlers in the temple next to the Al-Ibrahimi mosque. It is also demonstrated by the Israeli forces' massacre of other Palestinian citizens in the angry demonstrations following the massacre. Since Israel bears full responsibility for the massacre, it should take all necessary measures, in keeping with the Fourth Geneva Convention, to protect the population under its occupation.

The world has heard the denials of those who proclaim themselves defenders of human rights, while they have been aiming their propaganda and political weapons against Arabs and Muslims whom they accuse of practising terrorism. They have gone so far as to draw up a list of countries that they accuse of practising terrorism and protecting terrorists. But these champions of human rights have shut their eyes to Israeli State terrorism. They have given this country their blessing and have provided Israel with money and arms to wipe out and terrorize the Palestinian people and to empty the Palestinian territory of its population so as to make the dream of a greater Israel come true. This is Israel's ultimate objective, even though it pretends to work for peace.

The peace that Israel wants is capitulation and acceptance of the status quo. Instead of peace, the Palestinian people know only oppression and the denial of its legitimate rights, which have been recognized by the international community in resolutions of the United Nations and in the provisions of its Charter.

The eyes of the world are turned towards this Council to judge the credibility of claims that there is a new world order, after the supposed end of the cold war. The international community expects the Council to take the following measures. First the Council should condemn Israel for its failure to protect civilians under its occupation and should hold Israel fully responsible for the massacre in Hebron. Secondly, the Council should take action to ensure international protection for the defenceless Palestinian people in the face of terrorism and the tyranny of Zionist gangs supported by the occupation authorities. Thirdly, urgent measures should be taken to disarm the Zionist gangs. Fourthly, Israeli settlements in all the occupied Arab territories should be dismantled, pursuant to United Nations resolutions.

The massacre in the mosque of Ibrahim has exposed the true face of the Zionist regime and the true worth of its claims to be seeking peace. It puts on the shoulders of the international community, as represented here in this Council, the responsibility to ensure justice, not to apply double standards and to affirm fundamental principles: the protection of all peoples, regardless of race or religion, and the defence of their rights.

We want the Council to take action. We want it to show it has the political will to implement its decisions on the Arab and Palestinian causes, in particular resolutions 465 (1980) and 681 (1990).

The Palestinian people has freely chosen peace, and that decision is fully respected by the Government of Sudan and by most other Arab Islamic countries.

But the massacre in the Al-Ibrahimi mosque, and Israeli procrastination with respect to implementing existing arrangements, have shocked the world and proved that Israel is perpetuating the cold-war conditions that the rest of the world has left behind.

The Council should investigate this crime, a crime that proves that Israel does not desire peace. A just, lasting and comprehensive peace cannot be achieved in the context of Israel's policies; it can come about only when there is respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, when Israel withdraws from all the occupied Arab territories, and when a Palestinian State has been established, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Sudan joins in urging the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter so that the just, lasting and comprehensive peace desired by the entire world can be achieved.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Sudan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Khoshroo *(Islamic Republic of Iran):* First of all, Sir, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to pay a special tribute to the Permanent Representative of Djibouti for the excellent job he did during his presidency last month.

My delegation received with great shock and anguish the news on the massacre of Muslim people of Palestine by Zionist elements. On behalf of the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I wish to express the deepest condolences to the bereaved families and to the Palestinian people on the occasion of this horrible massacre.

Early last Friday morning, while innocent Palestinians were fasting during the holiest month, the forces of the Zionist regime slaughtered a large number of Palestinians. They martyred more than 50 people and injured more than 200. The victims were shot in the back while they were praying in the house of Allah, a safe place. The circumstances surrounding this tragic incident clearly prove that the attack was premeditated and led by elements from the Zionist army. That the Israeli soldiers guarding the mosque not only did nothing to stop the massacre, but opened fire on worshippers who were fleeing the scene, clearly indicates that full responsibility for the massacre lies with the Zionist regime. Furthermore, since the incident dozens of Palestinians have been martyred in various parts of occupied territories.

It is astonishing that Zionists coming from a land thousands of miles away from the occupied territories are allowed to migrate there, carry automatic guns and attack indigenous civilians in their mosque, while the Palestinians are not allowed to live in their homeland and are subjected to continuous Zionist brutality.

Numerous United Nations resolutions and reports of various United Nations agencies and other organizations regarding the very critical situation in the occupied territories leave no doubt as to the difficulties that the Palestinians continue to experience. The people of Palestine continue to live in circumstances in which the torture and massacre of innocent people, the application of collective punishment and other aggressive policies are carried out on a daily basis.

The recent crime by Zionists in the occupied territories will not be the last if the approach of the international community towards the question of Palestine continues to be the same. It is incumbent upon the Security Council to counter Zionist aggression and protect the Palestinians from the continuous oppression by the Zionist regime. It is high time the Security Council called for the liberation of occupied Palestine, as the only genuine way to bring about justice, and for the dismantling of all Zionist settlements and the return of all Palestinian refugees to their homeland.

Following the massacre the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a statement strongly condemning the savage crime which resulted in the martyrdom or injury of hundreds of Palestinian Muslims. The statement declared last Saturday a day of mourning to show the solidarity of the Iranian people with the Palestinians and its support for their struggle.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Khandogy *(Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian):* At the outset, Sir, I wish on behalf of the Ukrainian delegation to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. We believe that your sterling qualities and your diplomatic experience will help you guide the work of the Council to success, on this as on other important items.

I also wish to express our appreciation to His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, Ambassador Olhaye, for the able way in which he carried out his presidential duties last month.

We in Ukraine were shocked by the horrible crime committed at Hebron by a lone religious fanatic in the middle of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. As the Observer of Palestine reported to the Council, this resulted in the death of more than 50 civilians and the wounding of more than 200. The Government and the people of Ukraine condemn that senseless act and convey their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families along with their hopes that the wounded may recover speedily.

This crime took place in Hebron at a moment when the icy distrust between Jews and Arabs was beginning to thaw and, slowly overcoming the centuries-old weight of alienation, mistrust and hostility, the two sides were beginning to establish new relations based on mutual recognition of each other's basic interests. The Ukraine welcomed the decision on mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and we also welcomed the historic Declaration of Principles, signed in Washington on 13 September 1993.

The Government of Ukraine would express the hope that this terrorist act by a religious fanatic will not wipe out those positive changes that have taken place in the Middle East since the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO.

What happened in Hebron shows clearly how the seedlings of peace in the region are vulnerable to the acts of radical elements. The parties have already crossed one threshold, after which there can be no going back to the conditions that existed before, but they have not yet reached the next threshold, where the process of establishing and strengthening the trust between them becomes irreversible.

At this critical moment for peace in the Middle East an important role can and must be played by the United Nations. In our opinion, the time has come for the parties to be able to implement one of the provisions of the Declaration of Principles under which, with the consent of the parties, international or foreign observers would go to the occupied territories. Such a step would help guarantee the security of the Palestinians living in the occupied territories and at the same time would prevent the escalation of acts of hostility inspired by extremist radicals against the Arab and Jewish populations in those territories.

Ukraine notes the position taken by the Government of Israel, which condemned the events of 25 February and made a commitment to exercise strict control over the activities of radical groups in settlements in the occupied territories and to disarm them. In our opinion, this shows

the serious intentions of the Israeli side to achieve a restoration of peace in the region.

At the same time, the task of the international community is to confirm once again that the Government of Israel, as the occupying Power, bears full responsibility for ensuring protection for the Palestinians in the occupied territories in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and it is also obliged to carry out a full investigation of the circumstances surrounding this carnage.

The Government of Ukraine notes with regret that there has now been a break in the talks between Israel and the PLO. The process of peaceful settlement has been delayed. Emotions are being whipped up around a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. The time has come for responsible decisions to be taken. Either the parties recognize that they are weak and unable to counter acts of provocation, even by a single individual, or else they demonstrate their political courage and their resolve to achieve peace by sitting down once again at the negotiating table to continue the difficult dialogue aimed at establishing a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East which will finally break the cycle of violence and suffering in the region.

We are convinced that the decision to continue the peace process will be made. It should be noted that any delay in renewing the talks will play into the hands of the extremists who will see it as a green light to continue their terrorist acts intended to undermine the process of a Middle East settlement.

The delegation of the Ukraine would confirm its position on a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, the heart of which is the Palestinian problem, in the context of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which require respect for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine, including the right to self-determination, and for the security of all States in the region, including the State of Israel.

The delegation of Ukraine expresses its conviction that the Security Council, following consideration of this item, will take effective measures to ensure the effective protection of the Palestinian population of all of the occupied territories.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Ukraine for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hatano *(Japan):* First of all, Sir, I wish to congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are confident that with your well-known experience and excellent leadership qualities you will guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion. I also wish to pay special tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Olhaye of Djibouti, for the excellent job he did during his presidency last month.

The Government and people of Japan are shocked and profoundly disturbed by the recent massacre of innocent Palestinians in the mosque of Ibrahim in Hebron. The murder of people at prayer during this holy month of Ramadan is an act beneath contempt and deserving of universal condemnation.

Japan joins other members of the international community in extending its sincere condolences to the families of the victims at this time of grief.

It is essential that all the parties concerned exercise the utmost restraint to ensure that this latest act of violence will not spark another vicious circle of violence and retribution.

In this connection, we note that the Government of Israel has taken measures to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents, and that it has decided to establish a commission of inquiry. But it is important for Israel to take effective measures to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

At this critical juncture of the Middle East peace process, we firmly believe that it is of the utmost importance to reaffirm support for the peace process and implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

The Middle East peace process has far-reaching implications for world peace and security. The agreement reached last September between the PLO and Israel was a historic breakthrough in that process. The tragedy that occurred in Hebron last week should not be permitted to undermine that achievement. In particular, we urge all the parties involved in the peace process not to let this incident drive them away from the negotiating table. Let us hope that they will be challenged to redouble their efforts to bring lasting peace to the Middle East.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Japan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cissé *(Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (interpretation from French):* Firstly, Sir, in offering you our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March 1994, I wish to say that we are all convinced that your great experience and your diplomatic skills will help the Council to engage in successful deliberations.

I wish also to take this occasion to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Olhaye of Djibouti, for the exemplary way in which he guided the Council's work during the month of February.

Finally, I thank the members of the Council for having given me the opportunity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to participate in the Council's important debate on the situation in the occupied territory of Palestine.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish to express our strongest condemnation of the savage massacre that was perpetrated against innocent and unarmed Palestinian worshippers in the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque, one of the sacred places of worship of the Islamic nations. That assault, which was committed against a congregation at prayer during the holy month of Ramadan, has shocked and saddened the entire world community and jeopardized the peace process which had generated so much hope only a few months ago. This act of violence should be seen by the international community as a consequence of the illegal Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of authorizing the proliferation of armed militias.

The establishment of settlements and the confiscation of land have continued under different governments despite the peace negotiations, creating a situation that will be increasingly difficult to resolve.

In recent months, violent activities by settlers have multiplied without hindrance by the army. While noting the measures already taken by the Israeli Government, the Committee is convinced that it is imperative that steps be taken to put an end to this kind of activity on the part of the settlers and to begin the process of dismantling the settlements in accordance with international law and numerous Security Council resolutions.

In the wake of this massacre, violence has spread elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territory and clashes have been reported in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which have again been placed under curfew. The Committee is seriously concerned at reports that Israeli troops have opened fire on Palestinian demonstrators. So far, 65 people have been killed and 350 have been injured.

The Committee wishes to remind the international community that as long as Israeli forces occupy the territory of Palestine, Israel bears full responsibility for the protection of Palestinians, as the occupying Power in accordance with the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949.

As members of the Council are aware, our Committee has repeatedly intervened before the Council in the past to appeal for urgent measures to restore respect for human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory and to secure an international role in ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinians living under occupation.

The Hebron massacre and subsequent events demonstrate once again the need for such measures. It is obvious that the process of reconciliation and the building of peace between the two peoples cannot be held hostage to the actions of armed elements and the repressive measures taken by the Israeli army, which only exacerbate the deep sense of frustration and the opposition to the occupation.

The Committee, therefore, fully supports the Palestinian requests for an international presence to be established in the occupied territory and for measures aimed at disarming the settlers and limiting their presence and activities in Palestinian towns and villages. The Committee urges the Security Council to take the necessary measures in this regard.

The Committee joins the vast majority of the international community in affirming support for the peace process currently under way and for the Declaration of Principle signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993 in

Washington. It is clear, however, that the many delays in the implementation of the Declaration have eroded the credibility of the process and fuelled the atmosphere of violence and instability, which is fertile ground for extremism.

The Committee believes that only rapid and consistent progress in the current negotiations leading to the disengagement of Israeli forces and self-rule for Palestinians will prevent the present situation from deteriorating even further. The Committee calls on all concerned to do everything possible to surmount the current obstacles and to advance towards the full implementation of the agreements that have been reached.

This meeting of the Security Council indicates that the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is of major concern to the members of the Council and to the international community as a whole. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People therefore hopes that this debate will culminate in a clear demonstration of the Council's determination to find ways and means to reestablish the necessary sense of security for the Palestinian civilian population. The international community must assist the parties in proceeding rapidly along the road towards a negotiated peace which they have together embarked upon -the only road which can assure a lasting peace in the region.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Mohamed Mahmoud *(Mauritania) (interpretation from French):* My delegation is pleased to see the representative of a friendly country with which the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has excellent relations of cooperation presiding over the Security Council for the month of March 1994. France's constant efforts to preserve international peace and security and to promote human rights are widely recognized.

I am familiar with your personal qualities, Sir, and I know how effectively you have presided over the work of this Council in the past. I am therefore convinced that our work will proceed under the best possible conditions.

I should also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Roble Olhaye of Djibouti, for having so ably and perceptively presided over the Security Council last month, and in particular for his conduct of the debate on the massacre of Bosnian civilians at the Sarajevo market following the Serbian bombardment of 5 February 1994.

We also congratulate our Secretary-General, whose response to the carnage at the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque is a credit to the United Nations, and is in line with all the appeals to save the peace process begun in Madrid in 1991 and to speed up implementation of the provisions of the Washington agreement of 13 September last.

If the purpose of holding a debate is to permit an exchange of views and analyses in order to discuss an issue conscientiously and responsibly, to enable a body to seek the truth or to enable two parties to state their positions, then we could have dispensed with this debate, for we all know the facts. We all know who perpetrated this latest massacre.

It is all the more disturbing that the horrible carnage of Friday, 25 February, at Al-Khalil was committed against worshippers in a holy place; it was a massacre of unarmed, innocent people praying within the mosque during a month which is holy for more than a billion people and on a day that is also holy. The death toll of that atrocity is abhorrent to every human being. It is deeply disturbing to all Muslims; it is shocking to the Arab people; and it encourages all kinds of extremists.

The responsibility for this double crime cannot be shared. It was the work of Israeli extremists and the consequence of a situation which allows civilian settlers to be armed and to patrol the roads in occupied Arab territories. Otherwise, how could a doctor, known for his hostility to the peace process and wearing an officer's uniform, have entered without difficulty a holy place which is permanently guarded by the Israeli army and police, and in just a few moments kill more than 50 people and wound scores of others?

The Mauritanian delegation fully endorses the statements made by the Chairman of the Arab Group and the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference group, Ambassador Nabil Elaraby of Egypt and Ambassador Marker of Pakistan. We would add that we fervently hope that in the face of the carnage at the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque, an event of enormous gravity which could torpedo hopes for peace, which is so

precious, the international community will shoulder its full responsibilities.

In this connection, given its special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council must act resolutely and must urgently take clear, firm, concrete measures strongly condemning the perpetrators of this new, abominable act of violence and guaranteeing the protection of civilian populations, in keeping with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank the representative of Mauritania for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rahman *(Bangladesh)*: Let me express at the outset, Sir, our felicitations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are confident that under your able leadership the work of the Council will prosper.

I should also like to pay warm tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Olhaye, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, for his successful conduct of the Council's affairs in February.

The massacre in the Al-Ibrahimi mosque in Al--Khalil, Hebron, has fuelled anger, anguish and shock. We condemn this heinous act. We express our deepest sympathy to the bereaved families of the innocent victims of this senseless tragedy.

Bangladesh is party to, and fully endorses, the statements of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Non-Aligned Movement member States that, *inter alia*, urged the immediate convening of the Council. We believe that the Council's focus must be directed to two crucial elements: first, to affix responsibility, and, secondly, to take purposeful remedial action.

Whether the massacre was the insane act of a lone religious fanatic or carried out in conspiracy and collusion with others is not the question. The responsibility for protecting the Palestinian population and for anticipating and preventing such acts lies squarely upon the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which extends to all occupied Palestinian territories and of which Al-Quds Al-Sharif, Holy Jerusalem, is an integral part.

In the volatile situation prevailing in the occupied territories, and in the face of repeated outcries that such protection was absent and needed to be supplemented by an international presence, the horror in Al-Khalil represents yet another major lapse. The encroachment of militant settlers, their indiscriminate arming without any check and the encouragement of their increased presence was an invitation to inevitable violence. Remedial measures instituted by the Government of Israel following the 25 February act appear merely to paper the cracks. The policy of repression against the Palestinians continues, as evidenced by the subsequent deaths and the mounting numbers of those injured and wounded. The issue is tangible protection and the prevention of any recurrence of such atrocities. Any solution must address the real issues and not merely return to the status quo ante.

The Council has a bounden responsibility to take further action in the light of its past pronouncements and of the maintenance of its credibility in upholding international law. Bangladesh fully supports the call for a resolution that will address the root causes affecting the occupied territories, particularly the issue of disarming the settlers and ultimately - and expeditiously - dismantling the settlements.

The Secretary-General's offer to send United Nations observers appeared to be a step in the right direction. It was in conformity with the Declaration of Principles signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel in Washington on 13 September 1993 and with Security Council resolutions. We firmly believe that the need for a direct international presence in the occupied territories to ensure protection has become a pressing imperative.

The international community has welcomed the peace process that has been initiated as the first step towards a comprehensive and durable settlement of the Middle East problem. The acid test for promoting this process is squarely to anticipate and overcome the actions perpetrated by those bent on derailing it. Half-hearted measures cannot create confidence; they can only set back the real hopes that have been generated by the peace process.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Faihani *(Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic):* At the outset, Sir, I should like to extend to you warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also express the hope that your efforts to maintain international peace and security will succeed.

I should like also to thank Ambassador Roble Olhaye, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, for the tireless efforts he deployed during his leadership of the work of the Council during the past month.

My warm congratulations go to Argentina, the Czech Republic, Nigeria, the Sultanate of Oman and Rwanda on their accession to membership in the Council. We wish them success in their tasks.

Since the end of the past week, the Security Council has been discussing the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories resulting from the terrorist act committed by the fanatic Israeli settlers against defenceless Palestinian worshippers in the holy shrine of Abraham, which resulted in carnage that claimed the lives of many innocent people. We consider that the massacre was one of the most heinous crimes perpetrated against Palestinian civilians since the beginning of Israeli occupation, in 1967.

This odious crime was committed without heed to the sanctity that the month of Ramadan holds for Muslims and in contempt for the holiness of the place. We believe that it was the direct result of the illegal Israeli settlements and of the arms and support the settlers have been given in flagrant violation of international law, in particular the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories continues to deteriorate in the wake of this terrorist act. As a result, the Council is called upon urgently to take a firm stand in order to revitalize the peace process that is now under way. In my delegation's view, this can come about only if the following steps are taken: firstly, the Israeli settlers must be disarmed; secondly, settlement activity must be banned throughout the occupied territories, including Jerusalem; thirdly, an appropriate mechanism must be established to implement the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War; and, fourthly, an international commission should be dispatched to investigate the massacre. In that connection, appropriate measures must be taken to enable the commission to carry out its mandate, in keeping with resolution No. 5362 of the League of Arab States, adopted on 27 February 1994.

In the statement adopted by my Foreign Ministry on 26 February 1994, Bahrain condemned and expressed outrage at the heinous crime and odious carnage committed by the Zionist settlers against a group of Palestinians who were saying the dawn prayer in the shrine of Abraham in occupied Hebron - a massacre in which scores lost their lives and hundreds were injured. Indeed, we consider it a terrorist act, and we hold the Israeli Government and its agents fully responsible for such practices by the settlers, which contravene all international laws, norms and conventions and threaten the process of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

We call on the international community and the Security Council, especially its permanent members, to live up to their responsibilities in respect of this act by not merely denouncing and condemning, but by providing safety and protection for the Palestinian people and by guaranteeing its right to establish its own independent State on its own national territory.

Finally, the tragedy that now faces the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, demands that the international community take a firm stand and provide effective international protection. We believe that the provision of such protection would help make the peace process a success and would lessen the current tension in the region.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sacirbey *(Bosnia and Herzegovina):* Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your accession to another term as President of the Security Council. Your past experience in this role gives our delegation the utmost confidence that this body will be wisely guided. Allow me also to extend to the Permanent Representative of Djibouti our delegation's sincere acclaim on his responsible guidance of the Security Council last month, a month marked by new lows in terrorism directed towards murdering innocents and sabotaging peace. In the face of the terrorist shelling of afternoon shoppers in Markele marketplace in Sarajevo and the terrorist massacre of peaceful worshippers at the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron, both of which challenged the Security Council's dignity and authority while shocking the conscience of all peace-loving peoples, the Security Council

was led, in the most skilful manner, to rise to the occasion and meet those affronts.

These events demonstrate, in the most obvious fashion, the necessity of confronting ultranationalistic chauvinism and violence with steps that negate the ability of terrorists to carry out such barbarities. As proved by the experience of my country, ultranationalistic terrorism must be resolutely confronted or it will only gain in strength. When the perpetrators are confronted, their brazenness in waging terrorism is checked.

However, terrorism can re-emerge if resolute measures are not maintained with vigilance. Any failure to check terrorist acts can serve only to undermine the credibility of any peace process. The bullets used in this terrorist attack were fired not only at innocent Palestinian worshippers, but at the peace process as well.

My Government calls upon the relevant Israeli authorities to take all necessary measures to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories, consistent with relevant Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention. We welcome the Israeli Government's swift and unreserved denunciation of this terrorist attack and welcome those measures that have been taken to disarm known extremists and potential terrorists.

However, we must emphasize that if Israel's commitment to peace is to be fully realized more can and should be done to ensure the safety of all inhabitants of the region. It is of concern that dangerous signals continue to emanate from extremist elements. In this regard, Israel has the clear responsibility to disarm and/or withdraw all elements that may threaten peace and abridge the rights of the civilian population.

We welcome the new presence of international observers as a stabilizing force. We would also welcome dialogue and confidence-building measures that address all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the underlying causes. Promptly tackling the issues - including the settlements question - on a comprehensive basis is essential.

Allow me to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the slain worshippers, murdered by an individual bent on hate and the continuation of violence. We hope that peace and freedom, for which these worshippers were praying, will soon become a reality.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue its consideration of the item will be fixed in consultations with the members of the Council.

The meeting rose at 7.45 p.m.